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Essays, Expositions, &c.

ON PUBLIC PRAYER.

BY THE LATE JOSEPH HARBOTTLE, OSWALDTWISTLE, LANCASHIRE.

Who (i.e., the Presiding Elder), having ended the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present loudly shout in assent, Amen!

JUSTIN MARTYR, *Second Apology, about A.D.* 160.

THAT was an excellent definition of Prayer given by a poor cripple, when he said, "Prayer is telling the Great God what we feel we want of him." And in our devotions, whether private or public, just so much as agrees with this definition *is* prayer, and the remainder is something else.

Prayer and thanksgiving belong to the first elements of religion; and among every people at all acknowledging a Divine intelligence, these form a part of the worship rendered to that Supreme Power. To neglect these acts of worship is practical Atheism; nor can any amount of disbelief short of that dark and horrible extreme which denies the existence of a God, render consistent the conduct of those who pass their nights and days without a word or a thought of thanksgiving or supplication.

Prayer may be the utterance of the spirit not embodied in vocal sounds, as that of Hannah, or that of Nehemiah, when the king enquired the cause of his sadness; or it may be vocally uttered, as when Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple. Prayer may be private, offered by an individual alone; or social, when a family or a company of friends unite in service; or even more public, when presented by a congregation of worshippers. All social prayer must be vocal and audible; for though presented by one person, if others present hear and assent to the thanksgiving or prayer, it is so far social. But the prayer is only social to the same extent that it is agreed to by others; for if one should pray in the midst of a thousand and if no one besides unite in the prayer, it cannot be called a social prayer. When Stephen encompassed by a crowd of malignant persecutors, implored that his Saviour would receive his spirit and that he would not lay this sin to the charge of his murderers, the prayer was indeed offered in public, but it was an *individual* not a social prayer.

In whatever way we call on the Lord, there is something awfully sublime in the thought of a finite being like one of us approaching to speak to the infinite

God. The conviction of his unbounded presence and knowledge is overwhelming. That He, whom we address, is present and at the same instant equally present in the most remote parts of the world—in Britain, in America, in Australia, on every island of the Northern Seas and of the vast Pacific, at the very same instant—how amazing is this! We know to a certainty these places are thousands of miles apart, and yet God is present in the one, yea in every one of them as much as in another, and always there. Astronomers say that the sun is more than ninety millions of miles from our earth, and that the fixed stars are many times the distance of the sun from us—spaces unutterable and unimaginable—yet God is present at every one of those stars and always there! To us these are incomprehensible sayings, yet of the fact there can be no question, if we believe in the infinite God at all. For as our human spirit is present in every part of the body, so God is present in every part of the material universe. And if to this impression of the greatness of God, we add the conviction of his purity, surely we cannot approach without awe and humiliation.

In prayer of every sort the great purposes should be steadily kept in view. Those purposes are the rendering of homage to our Creator and Preserver, and the obtaining of blessings which we need from his bountiful hand. To pray for the mere sake of praying, or rather, for the show and the name of the thing, is useless and even worse than useless. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked." "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss." *Prayer without thought, without feeling, without heart, prayer for what God has never promised, prayer without faith, without earnestness, without perseverance, prayer for the purpose of gratifying pride or any other vicious propensity*, all such prayer is asking amiss.

While private or individual prayer is most strictly enjoined on the disciples of Christ, at the same time there are reasons of peculiar weight to encourage and urge us to social and public prayer and thanksgiving. Our object in this paper, however, is not so much to state those reasons, for no Christian will question them, but we would enquire whether the manner of attending to this duty is in accordance with its real nature and with the instructions of Holy Scripture.

That public or congregational prayer should be rightly offered, the following things appear requisite, namely,—*That their should be a due acknowledgement of the majesty, holiness, and goodness of God. That the words uttered should express the real feelings of the worshippers;* and, *That there should be the united consent or agreement of the believers present in presenting those supplications and thanksgivings.*

Unless we draw near to God trusting in the mediation, the sacrifice, the righteousness of Jesus, and with a deeply reverent, contrite, and thankful heart, there is no proper acknowledgement of the majesty, holiness, and goodness of God. Unless our words express our feelings, the heart is wanting, and we ask amiss. Unless the church unite in the prayer, it is not social prayer. It may be the prayer of the minister or brother who offers it, and accepted as his, but his brethren have not joined in the petition, or the address of thanks.

Now let us view the manner in which public prayers are offered in most of the congregations of the present age, those at least of our own native land. They may be generally included in one or other of four classes:—the Romish, the Protestant, the Methodist, and the Nonconformist; this last comprising the dissenting communities. In the first of these four there is an apparent solemnity; a shew of devotion which, when real, is highly commendable; but the prayers are read and recited in a language unknown to the greater part of the congregation. Some of those prayers are addressed to mere creatures, angels, or departed saints, or possibly saints who never existed. The worship is accompanied with bowing to images of metal, or wood, or stone, or other such material. In this there is so much that is anti-scriptural, so much that is anti-christian, yea, we might say immoral (for image-worship is forbidden

and accursed by the moral law), that every disciple of Jesus ought to avoid such religious services altogether.

In the English Protestant congregations within the communion of the establishment, the public prayers are mainly read from the Prayer-book. That written prayers are valuable as models or examples of devotion, no Christian can reasonably question. We may admit much more than this. Prayers, though prepared by others, may express the feelings which we wish to express; and if so, may be wisely and lawfully used either in public or in private. Indeed it is highly probable that the confessions and prayers recorded in the book of Nehemiah, the ninth chapter, were read in the congregation at the time referred to, approved and signed and sealed by the elders of the people. Yet all this cannot justify the binding of either ministers or congregations to a formal routine, whether they can in heart and conscience agree with it or not. Formality, especially in prayer, is too apt to corrupt the devotions of spiritual and godly men, and requires unwearied watchfulness in preventing its intrusion. What, then, can more surely mar public devotion, than using means which cannot fail to encourage this tendency? Besides, in some parts of the Prayer-book there are expressions so contrary to the teachings of Holy Scripture, that it seems unaccountable how men of enlightened understanding can possibly dare to use them in their addresses to Almighty God. We should deem it a most distressing bondage to a conscientious man, living in the days of such a monarch as George the fourth, to be compelled to declare before God that he was a "most religious king;" or for one now living to give thanks for the regeneration of a sprinkled infant, or the safe departure and sure and certain hope of a buried debauchee, or perhaps of an avowed sceptic.

> "I have no hope, his Lordship says, and dies:
> In sure and certain hope, the Bishop cries.
> Of these two noble peers, I pray thee, say, man,
> Which was the lying knave, the priest or layman?
>
> "His Lordship dies, an infidel confest;
> He's our dear brother, says the reverend priest.
> An infidel,—our brother, yet he cries!!
> And who dares say the reverend prelate lies?"*

But provided the public prayers, enjoined by the wisdom of Parliament, were free from these and other glaring evils, yet the principle of imposing such forms on Christian congregations would be utterly inconsistent with spiritual freedom, as well as utterly at variance with the apostle's declaration:—"We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26). It does not appear that during the first two centuries of the Christian era, the churches used a written liturgy, for Tertullian has been quoted as describing the Christians of his time "*praying from the heart without a prompter.*"

In favour of written or printed prayers, the main argument is, "*That since the general assent of a congregation is required to render public prayer at the same time social and united, it is needful that persons should know before hand in what requests or thanksgivings they will be expected to unite.*" Now fully admitting that such united assent is requisite, and expressing unfeigned approval and admiration of the stand which our brethren of the Protestant establishment have made to sustain this sadly neglected essential of public social worship, at the same time we cannot think written forms at all indispensable for that purpose. Why may not a Christian carefully attending to the free prayer offered by another, instantly decide that in its requests he can cordially join? The very fact of expecting and intending to join in the prayer, would be one means of checking and preventing his thoughts from wandering to other objects, and thus would promote his spiritual edification.

* On a Bishop interring an infidel nobleman.

Public prayer in Methodist congregations, includes both that read from the Prayer-book and free prayer. Most likely the minister is at liberty to select what he deems most suitable to be read; and if so, the chief objection on that ground is removed, and the responsibility rests on the minister to introduce what may be most suitable to the occasion. This use of the Prayer-book, we believe, chiefly remains in the large chapels of our great towns and cities. In others the use of free prayer is probably more common.

Public prayer among Methodists is often more animated, more vehement in expression, the sentences shorter and more pointed, and the tones louder, than among persons of any other denomination. There are likewise frequent and very general responses or tokens of assent. It may, however, be observed, that these generally occur more as matters of excitement than from deliberate judgment and devotional principle. We do not remember to have often heard their "Amen" at the recital of the Lord's prayer, with which their ministers, for the most part, conclude their introductory prayers. But if some strong or striking, or perhaps some quaint petition, excites a momentary feeling, the response is loud. We wish this were corrected. How strange it would seem in the getting up of a petition or memorial to some branch of our Legislature, were persons to suppose that *no one should sign it unless in a moment of passion!* And if we sign a petition to the Queen, or to Parliament, as a matter of calm deliberate conviction, why not thus unite in petitions or addresses to the King of kings?

But we enter a Nonconformist congregation. A hymn is sung, and the congregation standing up appear generally to join in that part of the service. A portion of Holy Scripture having been read, the minister says, "*Let us pray.*" He commences an address to Jehovah, in a very serious and earnest manner; and continues for ten or fifteen minutes, confessing sin, supplicating mercy, and presenting adoration and thanksgiving—perhaps *the congregation meanwhile remaining seated*—and at the close there is the solitary "Amen" of the minister, and public prayer is over. Now *can any one call this social or congregational prayer!* The minister does, indeed, invite the people to unite with him, when he says, "Let us pray." Some, it is true, may possibly join in heart and desire the things requested. But *so far as the prayer is social it is not public, and so far as it is public it is certainly not social.* Do the churches in such cases consider prayer as a part of *their* public worship. The writer of this paper remembers a gentleman some years ago, saying to him, that *the singing ought to be well attended to inasmuch as it is the only part of public worship in which the people take a share.* But have not the people of God as much reason to take part in the prayers as in the singing? And may they not as really take part in the one as in the other, by some audible expression of assent? And is this not sanctioned by Scripture, and in some passages expressly commanded? When the awful denunciations of the law were pronounced against various gross immoralities—"Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image," &c. (Deut. xxvii. 15—26)—the command is ten times repeated, that all the people should say, "Amen." Surely when giving thanks or offering prayer to the Lord, it is as reasonable that his people should cordially assent and glorify Him by public homage in this manner. So they are commanded to do, Psalm cvi. 48., "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: AND LET ALL THE PEOPLE SAY, AMEN."

The words of Paul, when forbidding prayer or thanksgiving to be offered in an unknown tongue, sufficiently demonstrate that in the early,—the *primitive* Christian churches, this was carefully observed; for the reason which he assigns depends upon this:—"How shall he that occupieth the place of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing that he understandeth not what thou sayest." This reason can be appropriate only on the principle that it was incumbent on the brethren, aye and we doubt not on the sisters too, to join in the thanksgiving. Why then ought we not to maintain the integrity of primitive worship in this, as well as in Baptism? &c.

Is there not reason to fear that congregations too often regard public prayer as a service with which they have little or nothing to do? Does not the fact of so many continuing seated, instead of standing or kneeling, indicate the same? We need not refer to the manner in which some employ themselves in turning over leaves, &c. A minister, some time ago, after having preached to a congregation, asked the friend at whose house he stayed, "Do you think a large part of your congregation are sceptics?" "No," said his friend, "I am not aware of that,—what makes you suppose so?" "Because," replied the minister, "so many of them sat during prayer." Certainly irreverence or indifference in public prayer is more like the conduct of sceptics than of Christians.

Our brethren may, perhaps, think the foregoing remarks captious, censorious, crochety. In regard to this, the writer will only say, that he has no wish they should be *really* such. He deems the subject one of much practical importance. The prayer of the Lord's people is an instrument of such power that we cannot be blamed for wishing it to be in the best possible working order. If the real idea of public prayer is the intercession of the minister in behalf of the people, then so let it be understood; but if the design is the united intercession of the assembled church, one may ask, is that design at all carried out? Can the minister with a clear conscience say, "*We* pray, O Lord,—*we* ask for these blessings,—*we* humbly thank thee," &c., when he has no evidence that a soul present is joining with him; not even in the thanksgivings at the Lord's Supper, when it might be reasonably expected that all would "WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH GLORIFY GOD" (Rom. xv. 6).

It appears, therefore, from the preceding remarks, that great mistake or great negligence exists in most of our congregations, concerning what is indispensable to the public social worship of the sanctuary of God. That public worship cannot be regarded as social and congregational worship, unless there be some audible expression of assent given by the congregation, or at least, by such of them as approve of the prayer or thanksgiving. That the Scriptural mode of signifying this assent is not by the people rehearsing the prayer after the minister, but by some word or words at the end of the several petitions, or of the whole when the prayers are closed. That all ministers and churches who wish to attend to the service of the Lord impartially, should take this into solemn consideration, inasmuch as every departure from the perfect standard must involve evil consequences; and if wilfully persisted in, must subject to a charge similar to that brought by the ancient Prophet—"ISRAEL HATH BEEN PARTIAL IN THE LAW."

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE word *Christianity* embodies the three ideas of *Christ*; of *one* other than Christ, or a believer in him, and that of something that *is*, or the doctrine of Christ which is believed by the one other. Thus there are three substantial elements in Christianity; its author, its truth, and its believer. Christ is the great Logos of Jehovah, or the Divine teacher. What He taught is the truth, the doctrine, or the sacred ideas which the church ought to believe, and must believe to have faith in real Christianity. Strictly speaking, no idea untaught by Christ can be a part of Christianity, while every idea that he did teach does, of necessity, form a portion of, and is essentially belonging to Christianity. *All*, therefore that Jesus taught constitutes "*the unity of the faith*," or the, whole doctrine, of the Divine teacher to be believed by all of Christ's people or the true church.

Now, it might be, or it might not be, that the entire doctrine of Christ is, or may be thrown together in a *system*, such as the learned assume *theology* to be. This is certain however, that, Jesus himself did not erect his doctrine into a formulated system, nor did his apostles do this for him, for they never made themselves Rabbis, Philosophers, Doctors of Divinity, or Theologians, after the

manner of the schools. To enable us to find the *principles* of Christianity, we have to find what Jesus taught as *foundation truths*, and to separate these from his *included* teachings. We say included teachings, because Jesus could not have any really minor or unimportant doctrines, for nothing can be unimportant that the Lord regarded of sufficient moment to teach at all.

Christianity is not a philosophy, or wisdom which is merely the logical or factual outcome of observed natural laws, or the scientific deductions from ethical axioms; but it is the dogma of a Divine teacher, whose *divine nature* and *divine mission* give the proper authority to his teaching; and therefore, while his teaching is not either contrary to nature, or opposed to reason; while it is not antagonistic to sound philosophy, and does not scorn to employ logic; yet, all these are purely human things, and subject to human imperfection; but the divine truth of the Divine teacher is perfect in itself; and because it is perfect it is dogmatic. It is a fundamental mistake to take Christianity to be subject of necessity, like all philosophy, to the tests of axiom, logic and induction for the evolution or demonstration of its truth; for the very fact of Christianity coming to us by a *Divine teacher* renders its subjection to human reason needless, for its truth is attested by divinity before it comes to human reason. This matter is of the greatest importance to Christians of the present time, especially inasmuch as the boasted learning of our time arrogates to itself the liberty of receiving, or rejecting, or modifying, Christianity according as it is, or is not, made to square with the rules of scholastic philosophy. An atheist rejects the idea of the existence of a personal God, on account of his own want of sufficient reasoning skill to demonstrate His Being! An infidel rejects the truth of Christianity, because he has been unable to prove, to his own satisfaction, the truth of the incarnation of Christ and the facts of revelation, inspiration, and miracles! To our mind these are the results of a *false rule of knowledge*; they are the results of regarding it *necessary* to prove all these things before accepting the *positive dogma* of a *Divine teacher*. If a Divine teacher has existed and given truth to the world, the divinity of the teacher is the prime guarantee for the verity of his teaching; and his dogma must be first taken as true, and then we may apply reason to it *to understand it*. If this be the right way to estimate the value of Christianity, it will teach us how to judge of it as being a mass of pure dogma, rather than a system of reasoned demonstrations in ethical philosophy. *Dogma* is the natural mode of *divine* teaching, for it rests its *truth* on divinity, and not on human ability to demonstrate. It does this *naturally*, because, a divine philosophy supposes a knowledge of all the infinite multitude of universal facts, which must be the proper data of such philosophy; and, no finite mind is capable of knowing all these data, and consequently, is unable to reason them out to their vast and all-comprehending conclusions. To *prove* Christianity to be true, therefore, is simply to prove the existence of Christ, which is simply done by accepting veritable history; and no man who believes that Plato or Socrates existed, can properly disbelieve that Jesus Christ existed; and no man can justly reject the testimony of the evangelists as to the teaching of Christ, who does not also reject the history of Tacitus and such historians who lived in past ages.

We hope we have made this *principle* appear plain, and that we have shown it to be both rational and sound, for to us it is a vital principle in relation to Bible Christianity. If we have made the matter clear, it will be seen that this principle simplifies the whole subject of *the relation of Christianity to human belief*. The view taken by many men in our day is, that the Bible is, of necessity, submitted to human reason as a test of its truth. If this be so then, it is dependent entirely on the collective reason of every age for its truth or untruth; and then it follows that it may be true in one age and false in another, or true to one nation and false to another, or true to one mind and false to another. This position, then, evidently gives the human mind—gives to human reason—a verdict in relation to Christianity which is not given to the human judgment with respect to any other kind of knowledge. *Facts* in nature exist

and are true ages before they are discovered and demonstrated to be true by the scientific discoverer. Discovery creates no fact—no truth—it only *reveals* it—finds out that it was so before it was seen to be. Now, if we have to wait till the whole mind of the world is in harmony of opinion as to the truth of Christianity, when may any of us believe it? On this rule the very apostles of Christ could never have had faith in the doctrine or claims of Jesus Christ! Moreover, if there is in this world any divine revelation at all, it is Christianity. And if there is no such revelation given to the world, then, the world has been left, till this hour, without any moral guidance more potent than that which has been slowly, and imperfectly, evolved out of the long ages of miserable blundering that have made up the experience of the world! To believe this latter, is infinitely harder than to believe, that the Creator of mankind has "spoken" to the world "by his Son." But, if the Son of God had brought "grace and truth" to us in the reasoning manner of the ancient or modern schools of philosophy, he would have stamped on his mission no claim to truth and faith higher than that of Aristotle, of Socrates, or Whateley, or Mill, of our own days. But, He did claim to be *divine*, and as the natural sequence of divinity, he taught not as the *Scribes* did, but with all the authority of God. We conclude, therefore, that *positive dogma* is the natural mode in which revelation should be taught; and consequently, that the province of human reason is simply to believe, and then, if it likes, to do as Paul did to *reason* of temperance righteousness and judgment to come, "until it stands with adoring awe in the midst of the vast wisdom of God, and looking as the angels do, into these things, exclaim, "O the depths" of the unsearchable knowledge, and wisdom, and goodness of God!

IOTA.

QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERS.

BY T. W. MEDHURST, GLASGOW.

No. I.—How shall I Give.

If you are a Christian, you should give to God according as God has given to you. You should give "on the Lord's Day," to the cause of God, and *as an act of worship*. You should give *freely*, *heartily*, and *cheerfully*. You should give *systematically*, and not spasmodically. You should give according to the *measure of your love to Jesus*, and your giving should always be an *expression of your love*.

Give CONSCIENTIOUSLY. Remember, Jesus still sits over against his house and watches how much his people cast into the treasury. Before you give, sit down and consult with conscience; then give honestly as conscience has directed. There would be no need for constant appeals from ministers and deacons for money, to carry on the Lord's work, if all the Lord's people would make their giving a matter of conscience.

Give PROPORTIONATELY. Let your income and your giving be proportionate the one to the other. Give as the Lord has prospered you. Give according to your ability. Let there be a proportion between what you *give* to God's cause, and what you *spend* upon yourself and family.

Give SYSTEMATICALLY. Too many of our church members never give unless under the influence of excitement. If they hear an earnest appeal from the pulpit, or, if some special object is pressed upon their attention, they will give a donation. And so, their giving is without system; it is irregular and spasmodic. They will give when they feel prompted to do so, but for want of system, for want of a settled principle, their giving is never in proportion to their prosperity.

Give CHEERFULLY. "God loveth a cheerful giver." Cheerfulness should animate us whenever we either work for, or give to, the Lord Jesus Christ. Cheerfulness always adds to the value of the gift bestowed. All God's gifts to us are bestowed cheerfully.

Give REGULARLY, PUNCTUALLY, and according to the plan laid down in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Paul there suggests a plan of systematic weekly saving; the laying aside and laying up in store, on "the first day" of each week, according as God has given prosperity. This method is the very best that could be adopted, and were it but adopted by all Christians the Lord's treasury would be always full. There must be rule, and rigid adherence to rule, if your giving is to be consistent and steady. Give unto the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, GLADLY testifying that, "WORTHY is the LAMB that was slain to RECEIVE * * * * RICHES" (Rev. v. 12). If our giving were always to God, and not to man, there would always be enough and to spare for the efficient carrying out and working of all the schemes devised for the spread of the gospel, and for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Reader, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do" for God, his cause, and his people, "do it with thy might." Let the widow of whom you read in Scripture, who in the exercise of a too rare, but not too strong faith, cast her all, with noble precipitancy, into the treasury, over against which Jesus sat, be an example to you in the matter of Christian giving.

"FROM THE TOP OF THE ROCKS I SEE HIM."

NUMBERS xxiii. 9.

"GOOD words sometimes come from foul lips." Pure water may come through an iron pipe as well as through a silver one, though in passing through the former it may contract what it would not from the latter. No one would despise a diamond if he picked it up among some common pebbles. A beautiful flower may grow on the weedy bank, and though we did not expect to find it there, yet we are willing to adopt it. So is it with blessed words spoken by unhallowed lips. These words lose none of their value because they were spoken by "the son of Bazas," and were uttered by one "who loved the wages of unrighteousness." These are words of precious meaning. The spiritual man sees more in them than at first sight appears. For if ever we view God, our covenant Jehovah, it must be "from the top of the rock." Indeed faith will take no other stand. She may walk in "the vale of tears," and labour in "the valley of Baca," yet the stand she takes to view her covenant-keeping God will be "the top of the rock." She climbs "the rock of ages" like "Jonathan and his armour bearer." That is her stand. From that lofty height she views the enemies of her soul with courage and calm confidence. "Samson went to the top of the rock Etam," but the Philistines fetched him down. But what is said of "our rock." "Their rock is not as our rock; our enemies themselves being judges." Jesus says, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here is our rock. On this faith stands, faith stays, faith builds. From the top of this she views all things; here she stands and laughs at all her foes. She looks down upon "the gods of the valleys." From the top of this rock there is a clear view. Let her eye be undimmed by unbelief, and she can "see Him who is invisible." *There* she finds a firm and secure stand. All else is sand. Jonathan not only climbed the rock and saw the enemy, but he *conquered* him! So where faith climbs the "rock of ages," and takes its stand on the firm basis of a precious Christ—who is the "sure foundation"—she then answers to her true character. "She is the *victory* that overcometh the world; even our *faith*." Oh! brother, are you on the rock? Are you looking to Him who is "the God of all grace?" And can you say, "from the top of the rock I see Him?" Still stand there. Oh! move not from that blessed position. Only there will you be able to say with assured confidence—

"My steady soul would fear no more,
Than solid rocks when billows roar."

Child of God, your courage need never fail there. The enemy's arrows cannot fly so high; the storm of life can never shake it; its summit is *never*

clouded. The reason why God's children have so little faith and courage is because they do not get to the TOP of the rock. Many are *near* Christ who are not *on* him. Many stand on the *side* of the rock instead of getting on the *top*. The broadest and clearest view is from the *top*. Some seem to set the foot of their faith upon a partial view of the work of Christ and his blessed person. Now, if faith would be strong, clear, vigorous, and victorious, it must stand on the top of the rock. It must stand on the entire complex personality, and blessed and finished work of Christ. It must rest on "Emmanuel," and "all that Jesus hath done and suffered," and that will be "the top of the rock."

Bexly Heath. WILLIAM FRITH.

FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE.

BY REV. WM. PATTON, D.D. NEW HAVEN, CT.

THIS phrase is found only in Hebrews, vi. 11: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." The literal rendering is the *full bearing* of hope. The figure is supposed to be taken from the tree, heavily ladened with fruit, and which gives the assured hope of abundant ripe fruit. Whilst we do not discard this, we think the figure is taken from the homeward-bound ship, borne onward by the pressure of the favouring wind. The mariner, when he sees the sail bellying forth under this pressure, and the ship crowded forward, has assured hope that he shall reach home. So the Christian, under the cheering influence of the gospel, the animating pressure of the promises, and the leadings of the Holy Spirit, should have the most assured hope of final and complete salvation. This state of mind necessarily includes the full assurance of faith, and cannot exist without it. If there is any doubt about the truth and divinity of Christianity, there can be no hope, much less full assurance of hope. But the full assurance of faith does not necessarily include the full assurance of hope. For this latter, in addition to the fullest confidence in the divine origin of Christianity, expresses an assured personal and experimental interest in this way of salvation through the crucified One.

We have said it is indispensable to being a Christian that we should have the full assurance of faith; but we may be a Christian without having the full assurance of hope. Many, who have hope in Christ, who have prevailing, comforting hope, still are not yet free from doubts and fears concerning themselves. They have no doubt as to the truth of Christianity. Whatever becomes of them, whether or not they are truly converted and savingly interested in this religion, they have no doubt that Christianity is true. Such is the nervous temperament of some that they cannot have the full assurance of hope. Those who know them best have no doubts concerning them, for they see in them the clearest evidence of a Christ-like spirit; still they cannot so free themselves from doubts and fears as to be comforted with assurance.

Many Christians, and even Christian teachers, by applying to the full assurance of hope that which belongs only to the full assurance of faith, discourage themselves and thrust others into darkness and wretchedness. As the full assurance of faith is indispensable to being a Christian, and not discriminating this from the full assurance of hope, they say no man can be a Christian unless he has the full assurance of hope. Such teaching is neither wise, nor does it minister to the edification and comfort of the children of God. Though all Christians do not actually attain to the full assurance of hope, still the Scriptures teach that it is attainable, and ought to be sought after most diligently. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to"—that is, in order to—the "full assurance of hope." He had commended them for their "work and labour of love," their diligence, in assisting and comforting their brethren, by their ministering to the saints; now he exhorts them to the same diligence, so that their hope might be steadfast and unwavering, and that

they might have personally the comfort of full assurance. The apostle Peter also, with some particularity of detail, points out the process by which full assurance may be reached—2 Peter, i. 4-11: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And, besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotton that he was purged from his old sin." Thus, by the cordial belief in the promises, they would only become partarkers of divine nature, and separate themselves from the vices practised by the wicked, but they would add to their faith courage under trials, and by increasing knowledge they would govern themselves with patience under affliction, having love to their brethren and even to their enemies. Abounding in these graces, they would be fruitful in all right-doing. The encouraging result of this process the apostle thus states: "Wherefore the rather, brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is apparent that this attainment in the divine life is not secured by any dream, or vision, or special revelation, or rapture; but by a persevering life of holy living. The consciousness of prompt, cheerful, loving obedience to God, of desire to serve Christ, and of readiness to do all his known will, having pleasure in so doing, will be evidence of our love to him. As this love becomes more and more manifest and abiding, the hope of our acceptance will become more and more firm, and bright, and assured. This assurance is not based upon our own works or merits, but upon the immutability of the divine promise and purpose, and the exceeding richness and power of His grace. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter i. 5). "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24, 25).

The Christian who hopes that he is a true believer, and personally interested in the precious promises; who hopes that he is sealed by the sanctifying spirit, and is a "partaker of the glory that shall be revealed," has the "full assurance of hope." So felt the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 1, "For we know that, if our earthy house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord." "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him."

Poetry.

"'TIS BETTER ON BEFORE!"

With steady pace the pilgrim moves
  Towards the blissful shore,
And sings with cheerful heart and voice,
  "'Tis better on before!"

His passage through the desert lies,
Where furious lions roar;
He takes his staff and smiling says—
"'Tis better on before!"

When tempted to forsake his God,
And give the contest o'er,
He hears a voice which says "Look up!"
"'Tis better on before!"

When pale affliction clouds his cheek,
And death stands at the door,
Hope cheers him with her sunniest note—
"'Tis better on before!"

And when on Jordan's banks he stands,
And views the radiant shore,
Bright Angels whisper, "Come away!"
"'Tis better on before!"

And so it is, for high in Heaven,
They never suffer more;
Eternal calm succeeds the storm,
"'Tis better on before!"

Nor night, nor death, nor parting sounds,
Can reach that healthful shore;
But peace, and joy, and endless life;
"'Tis better on before!"

Page for the Young.

THE MOTHER'S LAST GIFT.

There was a young man who had been trained up in a goodly manner, and had been sent away to a neighbouring town to be instructed in business. He fell in with a knot of infidel young fellows, and they laughed his faith away. A great many more are laughed out of their faith than ever got argued out of it. Some could go to the stake for Christ who could not go to the pillory for Him. Oh, young people, if you let the laugh of fools get you into hell, remember that the laugh of fools cannot get you out again. They laughed away this young man's faith.

His mother, a godly woman, was taken ill. He loved his mother. There was no regular coach, and he got some conveyance and travelled all night that he might get to where she was; and he got there just as the sun was rising. His sister was at the door dismissing a friend who had been passing the night in vigil with the mother. He speedily went up-stairs, and into the quiet chamber. He drew aside the curtain, and looked upon his mother's face, so pale and motionless that he at first thought she had gone, and was about to exclaim that his mother was dead, but was relieved by seeing a beautiful smile pass over her countenance, and half opening her eyes she said, "Oh, I thought I was there." He inquired, "Where, mother?" In the dim twilight of the morning she did not recognise her son, and thought it was one of her other children who spoke. "Where mother?" — "Hark!" He leant forward, anxious not to lose a word—

"Hark! they whisper; angels say,
'Sister spirit, come away!'"

"I come," said she, "to join your everlasting song." You cannot tell how his heart felt, as he thought "Well, what consolation these Christian people get after all!" His eyes were full of tears, and he turned away: he thought it unmanly to weep. Young men, never be ashamed of shedding tears of tenderness. The tears of a tender heart are the jewellery of our humanity. Away with the stony heart that cannot weep at a mother's bedside. I don't envy the

man who never sheds a tear. He turned away; and took what was lying in the window, and thought to get a little calmer by reading; but he heard his mother's whisper again, and he could hear her saying the words of the hymn:—

"Then shall I see and hear and know
All I desired and wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."

He now thought he *must* try to relieve himself, and opening the book, thought he would read a little but the first words that caught his eye were these,—

"Dost thou feel these arguments, Lorenzo?
Or is there naught but vengeance can be
felt?"

He looked at the book; it was Dr. Young's "Infidel Reclaimed." He threw it down; he could bear no more, and went down stairs. While he was partaking of refreshments which in the interim had been provided, his sister began to tell of what God had been doing for her soul. It was well he had been up stairs, or else she would have been met with torrents of ridicule. Every morsel he ate seemed to grow in his throat.

The mother heard that her son had arrived. It was the desire of her heart to see him, and her other children. They were all summoned up to her apartment, and when they had got into the chamber, she called the youngest to her bedside, and spoke some words of affection, and gave some tokens of her dying love, and prayed God's blessing on her youngest; and so she went on till she came to her first born. The children sat weeping, and nothing was heard save the sob of almost broken hearts. She did not call her son, and at last he thought, "My mother knows I am an infidel." He wished for some kind words from his mother, but he could not bear that silence, and he rose up and went towards the door to make his escape, the tears running between his fingers which covered his face. But the eye of the mother followed, and she cried, "My son! my son!" and he came and knelt by her bedside. She said, "I know you *doubt*; but I see a world of spirits bright, and

'Angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come.'

Would you have your mother now give up these bright hopes for the dark creed of Voltaire and Pain? O my son," said she, drawing out from under her pillow her much worn, much loved Bible, "take that as the last gift of love from your mother. Take that blessed volume; it has been the *cruse* that has given sustenance to her in the day of her thirst, the *staff* on which she has leaned, the *oil* of her lamp; and God grant that, although you doubt now, it may be your lamp and staff too."

I need not tell you that that young man buried all his infidelity in his *mother's grave.—From "In Heaven," by Samuel Coley.*

SOWING LITTLE SEEDS.

Little Bessie had got a present of a new book, and she eargerly opened it to look at the first picture. It was the picture of a boy sitting by the side of a stream, and throwing seeds into the water.

"I wonder what this picture is about," said she; "why does the boy throw seeds into the water?"

"Oh! I know," said her brother Edward, who had been looking at the book; "he is sowing the seeds of water-lilies."

"But how small the seeds look!" said Bessie. "It seems strange that such large plants should grow from such little things."

"You are just sowing such tiny seeds every day, Bessie, and they will come up large, strong plants after a while," said her father.

"Oh no, father; I have not planted any seeds for a long while."

"I have seen my daughter sow a number of seeds to-day."

Bessie looked puzzled, and her father smiled, and said, "Yes, I have watched you planting flowers and seeds and weeds to-day."

"Now I know that you are joking, for I would not plant ugly weeds."

"I shall tell you what I mean. When you laid aside that interesting book, and attended to what your

mother wished done, you were sowing seeds of kindness and love. When you broke the dish that you knew your mother valued, and came instantly and told her, you were sowing seeds of truth. When you took the cup of cold water to the poor woman at the gate, you were sowing the seeds of mercy. These are all beautiful flowers, Bessie. But I hope my little girl has been planting the great tree of "love to God," and that she will tend and watch it, until its branches reach the skies, and meet before his throne."

"And the weeds, father?"

"When you were impatient with baby, you sowed the seeds of ill-temper. When you spoke crossly to Robert, you planted anger. When you waited some time after your mother called you, you sowed disobedience and selfishness. These are all noxious weeds. Pull them up. Do not let them grow in your garden."

Reviews.

The Preacher's Counsellor. By ATHANASE COQUEREL. Translated from the French by the Rev. R. A. BERTRAM. Cloth, lettered. Pp. 204. London: ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster-row, E.C.

ATHANASE COQUEREL has been well known for nearly half a century as one of the most popular and eloquent preachers in the Reformed Church of France. He has the reputation of belonging to what we should call in England "*the Broad Church Party*" of his communion. Certainly his opinions on many points cannot be called rigidly orthodox, but the opposite. Still, he is undoubtedly a very able preacher, and is eminently qualified to give advice to his brethren in the ministry, as to how to prepare their sermons most effectively. M. Coquerel's treatise on preaching is not, strictly speaking, *a theological work*: it is simply an exposition of the most effective methods of presenting what each man believes to be God's truths to the ears and intellects of the people. On the mere art of preaching, the famous Frenchman has much to say that will at once commend itself to every thoughtful mind; but on some points our brethren will, no doubt, be prompted to exclaim, "These are hard sayings, who can hear them?" What, for example, will they say of the opinion, that, one sermon per week is as much as any man can be reasonably expected to produce? We much fear that if any of our pastors were to attempt to act upon this principle, and were to spend the whole week in the preparation of but one sermon, they would be cried down as lazy and incompetent, however elaborate, and instructive the one sermon might be.

The fact is, Mr. Coquerel sets the standard of excellence that we should aim at in the pulpit *exceedingly high*. To prepare one sermon of the character that his principles of composition demand, would tax all the powers of any man. Every word is to be written out at full, then carefully learned off, and in the pulpit recited memoriter. "Memorisation," he says, "is the method most widely spread. Incontestably it is the most prudent, and the surest. It ought to be that of all young ministers during a long novitiate, a novitiate of several years, for the simple and sure reason, that, if we begin with extemporisation, we are lost. It will be easy to demonstrate this. I hasten to add that I intend to speak here of recitation entire, complete, keeping to what has been written, neither more nor less, and even to the end. The advantages of this system are certain." (P. 115.)

Well, perhaps they are, but its disadvantages are as certain. With all that our author says on the desireableness of the fullest, the most careful, the most elaborate preparation, and the complete writing out of our sermons, we fully agree. But to learn off the sermons thus composed, and repeat them by a sheer effort of memory, is a bondage insufferable. A few notes in the pulpit to aid the

memory are, in our view, infinitely to be preferred. These, combined with conscientious previous preparation of the whole discourse, will secure the correctness and precision of the read sermon, with the ease and fluency of the extemporaneous style. One thing is certain,—our sermons cannot be prepared too carefully—they may be prepared too carelessly.

What Mr. Coquerel has to say to us on *the dull tame style* of the Anglican church is well worthy of attention:—

"This system has for a long time been that of the Anglican church, it reigns there still, although it has begun to pass away, and we know into what a decay it has brought it. The Anglican Bishop, or minister, comfortably leaning upon a cushion of velvet, large enough to receive his manuscript, read with the most trusting placidity, without hazarding any other gesture than the movement of turning the pages, and scarcely did he permit himself, at wide intervals, what was called 'the waving of the hand," that is to say, the effort of raising the hand in order to let it fall speedily upon the side of the pulpit. This was a systematic and permanent denial given to the old principle that *action is the essence of oratoric art*, this principle so recommended by Demosthenes, of which Cicero, supporting it in turn in the strongest terms, recalls the famous saying that the three first qualities of the orator are—1st, action—2nd, action—3rd, action. The peaceful delivery of the Anglican church interdicted recitation; and much more extemporisation; they were bound to read. During this time, the orators of the Dissenting churches took care to become truly orators; they have thus made an approach to the Episcopal church from which it is far from having removed itself. The members of its clergy who have acquired a real ascendency over the masses, have more or less renounced this inertness of elocution, and have walked in the steps of Irving and of Spurgeon." (Pp. 162-3.)

We could have wished that Mr. Coquerel had given us more fully his thoughts upon "*Exegesis in Sermons.*" This is the most important aspect by far of sermonising. Preaching is the exposition, and illustration, and enforcement of God's word; and our first duty is to get at the real mind of the Spirit in the text and the context, and to see to it that our sermon is a forcible presentation of *that* to our hearers. Mr. Coquerel puts this question:—"Must we extract the subject from the text, or seek the text for the subject?" and he answers, "*Sometimes the one and sometimes the other.*" Now from this view we utterly dissent. A sermon should be *in every instance* wrought out of the text. It is an insult to God's word to make its verses mere *mottoes* for our harangues or essays. A sermon which does not honestly and forcibly interpret and apply to the heart and conscience some passage of Scripture, may be a pleasing oration, but it is no longer a sermon.

Our first business before we proceed to the composition of our sermon is, to *bottom our text*. It must be subjected to the most careful critical examination in the original. The exact derivation and sense of each word, and the grammar and construction of the whole passage, should be settled to the best of our ability. The context, and the circumstances under which the text was written, should also be fully weighed, as well as every other help to a true apprehension of its spirit and scope. When we have thus fairly and fully mastered the text with its surroundings, we shall be competent to prepare a sermon upon it, *but not until then*, and when we have done this, three fourths of our difficulties in the composition of our sermon will be removed. A correct and full exegesis of our text will *ipso facto* tell us how it should be handled. It will lay a good, solid, trustworthy foundation, for illustration and appeal. It will furnish the skeleton which logic, imagination, eloquence, and application shall enable us, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to clothe with flesh and life. The critical *process* will mostly be hidden from our hearers, but the instructive *results* will appear in the correctness and precision of our teachings. Pedantry in the pulpit is as great an abomination as impudent ignorance. No real scholar will intrude *needless* niceties of criticism upon his audience. It is sufficient, generally speaking, to give the mere results of such investigations. But

the preacher should be able *himself* to expound his text from every point of view.

We are not, however, writing an essay but a review. The book before us deserves the serious attention of all our preachers. It abounds with wise sayings and weighty counsels. The "Broad Churchism" of the author scarcely appears from beginning to end. Little is said on the doctrines that we are to believe; we are simply told how the doctrines that we do believe are to be presented to the minds of others.

It was the privilege of the writer of this review to listen to the voice of the eloquent Frenchman in the month of August, 1849, and he has the most lively recollection of the impression which that gifted man produced. Athanase Coquerel, as an orator, is all that he requires others to be by the teachings of his book. Let us add, that the work before us is written in a very pleasing, popular style, and that every one who begins to read it, is pretty sure to finish it. The translation, too, in spite of occasional stiffness and excessive literalisms, is clear and flowing as a rule. If the price had been stated we would have given our readers the benefit of the information.

Scripture Meteorology and Modern Science. By ALEXANDER MCLEOD, Glasgow. Glasgow: George Gallie, 99, Buchanan-street. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliott. London: James Nisbet and Co. 1867. Cloth, lettered. Pp. 328.

THIS book is an exceedingly well-meant attempt to harmonise the teachings of the Holy Scriptures with the discoveries of modern science. The execution, however, hardly realises all that we should desire in such a work. That the word of God contains any scientific blunders we (with our author) peremptorily deny. It is our so-called science which is often at fault, not the Holy Scripture. At the same time it is just as certain that our *interpretations* of the Divine Book are frequently inaccurate and need revision. The word of God contains no falsehood, but our expositions are often erroneous. We must distinguish between the divine testimony, and man's ideas of its signification, however long and widely received those ideas may have been. All Christendom may err in its interpretation of particular incidents and allusions, and all the scientific associations in the world may be at sea in their interpretation of individual phenomena; but the truth taught by The Christ still stands, *the Scripture cannot be broken.* Every word of God is pure.

As a true natural philosophy advances, and the science of biblical interpretation becomes perfected, both will approximate more nearly to each other; and it will be found that the two divine records, the created and the revealed, contain no contradictions, but are the harmonious witnesses of the same infinite and all pervading Spirit, Jehovah of Hosts.

Mr. Alexander McLeod's book is a contribution towards bringing about this desirable reconciliation between science and revelation. He stoutly contends against the operation of "*blind unchanging laws,*" (p. 19,) and maintains that, "the omnipotent Creator at first adjusted all the forces of the physical creation to one another, and still directs their operation in a suitableness to the ends both of life and moral government." These words furnish the key-note to the whole work before us.

We believe in what are called *natural laws.* But let these terms be defined clearly, and they become harmless, so far as any hostility to a Divine Ruler of all is concerned. *Law is nothing without a law-giver to enforce it.* Blind, dead, unintelligent matter, it is self-evident, cannot impress laws upon itself, nor can it keep such laws in operation. There must be a Divine Creator, and ruler of all, and what are called natural laws are nothing but the orderly and regular operations of his hands. "He speaks and it is done: He commands, and it stands fast."

We are not sure that Mr. A. McLeod's science is always faultless. Some of his opinions (for example, those respecting the waters above the firmament), are open to grave questions,

besides not being necessitated by an enlightened interpretation of the passages of Scripture which are quoted in defence of his views. But these are disputable matters. With by far the greater part of the book before us every devout Christian philosopher will cordially agree. We thank Mr. A. McLeod for this contribution to a most important branch of our current literature, and trust his book will have a wide circle of appreciating readers. It deserves to be thoughtfully studied by every one.

The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks. Edited, with Memoir, by the Rev. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART, Liverpool. Vol. IV. Containing, The Crown and Glory of Christianity. Edinburgh: James Nichol. London: James Nisbet and Co. Dublin: G. Herbert. Pp. 446.

THIS precious volume of holy Thomas Brooks' was first issued in the year of the ejection, 1662. The edition was a very large one, but it abounded with errata which Mr. Grosart, with his characteristic industry and painstaking, has carefully corrected. In the first edition the title page contained the following:—"The Crown and Glory of Christianity; or, Holiness the only way to Happiness. Discovered in LVII. Sermons, from Heb. xii. 14, where you have the necessity, excellency, rarity, beauty, and glory of holiness set forth; with the resolution of many weighty questions and cases. Also motives and means to perfect holiness: with many other things of very high and great importance to all the sons and daughters of men, that had rather be blessed than cursed, saved than damned. By Thomas Brooks, late preacher of the gospel at Margaret's, New Fish Street, and still preacher of the word in London, and pastor of a congregation there," &c. &c.

The work is all that this title claims for it; is full of unction and savour; and will be read with deep interest by every devout person. Ministers and people will do well to familiarise themselves with the writings of Thomas Brooks.

Mr. Nichol has just announced his *Fourth Year's Issue of Commentaries of the Puritan Period*, and we hasten to give our readers the benefit of the information.

"The Fourth Year's Issue will consist of the following works, in crown 4to, handsomely and durably bound. The three volumes will be supplied at 16s. 6d., or separately, at 7s. each, and be issued as under:—

On 1st June, "George Newton on the 17th Chapter of John." On 1st October, "The Saints' Happiness; or, Lectures on the Beatitudes, by Jeremiah Burroughs." On 1st February, 1868, "Samuel Smith on 1st Psalm; Thomas Pierson on 27th, 84th, 85th, and 87th Psalms; Gouge on the 116th Psalm."

With great pleasure we subjoin the following appeal:—

"The Publisher feels sure that the republication in this cheap form of these rare and valuable works, which have always been highly prized, will be welcomed by all his Subscribers.

"He has received a large number of letters from influential clergymen of all denominations, expressing their approval of the scheme, and their sense of the great importance of the valuable commentaries contained in this series being produced at the present time, in such a handsome and attractive form, and at a price which renders them easily obtainable by all students of theology.

"As a large number of Subscribers is necessary to enable the Publisher to issue these volumes, he takes the liberty of soliciting all those who are interested in the scheme to bring this Prospectus under the notice of their friends, as opportunity offers. To those who have already rendered very important service to the series by recommending it, he begs to tender his best thanks."

Our readers will all be glad to hear that the following Works of the Series may still be had at the original subscription price:—

"The first year's issue—I. Airay on Philippians and Cartwright on Colossians. II. King on Jonah, and Rainolds on Obadiah and Haggai. III. Stock and Torshell on Malachi, and Bernard and Fuller on Ruth. The second year's issue—I. Hardy on First John. II. Marbury on Habakkuk and Obadiah. III. Bayne on

the Ephesians. The third year's issue—Gouge on the Hebrews, in three volumes. Each year's issue, consisting of three volumes in crown 4to, handsomely and durably bound, is supplied at 16s. 6d., or in separate volumes at 7s. each.

The London Quarterly Review. No. LV. For April, 1867. London: Elliot Stock. Pp. 268.

THIS number is of deeper and more varied interest than any of its predecessors that have come under our notice. It is able, scholarly, and judicious; and yet popular, and, occasionally, truly eloquent in its style. The London Quarterly is one of the most solid and reliable of its class. The contents of this number are:—Greek History: Archives de la Bastille: The Life and Writings of Ulric Von Hutten: Quinet on the French Revolution: Charles Lamb: The Gay Science: Methodist Sunday Schools: The Apostolical Fathers: with forty-two brief literary notices of great interest. By the way, on what principle of proportion has the editor dismissed Mr. J. C. Marshman's great work on The History of India with a six-line notice? Surely he will give that invaluable book another and fuller review.

We have also received the following, Published by Elliot Stock:—

Christian Baptism, by CHARLES WHITE. Price Sixpence. A capital pamphlet of forty-six pages, which exhausts the baptismal controversy. It deserves a wide circulation. *Hymns not Ancient but Modern. Colenso, The Bible, and the Zulu.* A Poem. *Divine Fellowship.* A Poem. All three by W. POOLE BALFERN. *About Glass Houses and Stone-throwing.* By A FREE CHURCH BISHOP. *A Congregational Lectionary:* By Rev. JOHN JAMES. *Thoughts on Inspiration.* By Rev. JOHN DOUGLAS, Portadown. *The Sin of Bribery.* By ELVERY DOTHIE, B.A. *The Scattered Nation.* Number for March.

Published by W. H. Collingridge, Aldersgate-street.—*The Gospel Magazine.* For February and March. *Old Jonathan.* For February and March.

Published by Houlston and Wright, 65, Paternoster-row. — *The Church Catholic. Priestly Absolution.* Anti-Ritualistic Tracts, Nos. 3 and 4. By JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M.A.

Clifton Sermons. The Little Gleaner. The Sower. All for March. As well as *The Class and The Desk.* Part X. By Sangster, La Belle Savage Yard; and, *The Watchmen of Ephraim*, for March, by Macintosh, 24, Paternoster-row.

Intelligence.

SAXONY.

BELOVED EDITORS.—"Israel shall do valiantly" (Numb. xxiv. 18). This is a glorious promise, at which the people of God should rejoice—which it should write on its banner and make its battle-cry, and on the ground of which it should never fear, but daily engage again in the holy war, knowing it shall do valiantly, though the world were filled with devils, and however strong Moab and Edom and all the heathen nations abroad may be. Israel then, when the promise first was given, was a small and despised nation, but still it was said that they should do valiantly, and really they did so, as under Joshua and David. So it is with the spiritual Israel, the people of Christ, in comparison with the world around, they are a small and a despised people, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" but still they shall do valiantly, for the Lord hath spoken it and he is himself the great Captain with them. "Israel shall do valiantly," this is a promise which we overlook so much whilst God continually fulfils it. He *has* fulfilled it, is *still* fulfilling it, and *will* some day fulfil it in the fullest sense of the word, above asking and understanding.

I rejoice that in reporting now our experiences of the last two months, I can give a testimony to the truth of the above promise. The Lord according to his promise, gave us various victories:—I. *Religious Liberty in Saxony, Altenburg.* When, about three years ago, the work of the Lord commenced in Altenburg, religious liberty was there, as in all Saxon countries, quite an unknown thing. Still, we took liberty—liberty to preach the gospel and administer the Lord's ordinances; but soon persecution was raised against us in various ways, as for instance, when I was about to hold the second public meeting there, the police interfered and would only permit me to deliver a lecture, but to have no singing, no prayer, or anything which might have given to the meeting the appearance of a religious service. Our young members were for a long time only permitted to have their meetings behind locked doors, and last summer several of them were imprisoned because they had admitted other than members to their services. However, fully two years ago I handed in to the highest authority a special petition for religious liberty, to which I added our printed "confession of faith." In the same time we also petitioned Him, who has all power in heaven and on earth; and to his praise be it now said, that we have not prayed and laboured in vain, for a few weeks ago we were summoned by the Altenburg authority and told that our petition had been considered and that full liberty was granted us—liberty to hold public services—to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, and to educate our children in our own religion. Our joy was great at this victory, and we now felt ourselves again constrained to praise Him from whom all blessings flow, to ask his blessing on the Altenburg authority, and to beseech him to bless the gained liberty to the extension of his kingdom.

II. *Various Conversions and Baptisms.* Lord's Day, the third February, was in Halle, where I preached in the afternoon on the words, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul" (Lam. iii.24). In the evening, after I had had the Sunday school, because there was to be a baptism, I preached on "*the three different characters*," whom we have in almost every meeting, and whom we also meet in the word of God, each one asking a question, by which we just recognise the character; we first heard and considered the question of each one, and then gave to each his answer out of the Scripture. These characters were: *First*, The worldly man.

Question: "Who will show us any good? (Psalm iv. 6). This may be the speech of scorn, or an enquiry after happiness.

Answer: "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us"! (Psalm iv. 6; or, Micah vi. 8). That is, be gracious unto us—and that is something really good—the grace and mercy of God.

Second, The Penitent.

Question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved"? (Acts xvi. 30.)

Answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. (Acts xvi. 31.)

Third, The Christian.

Question: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do"? (Acts ix. 6.)

Answer: "Arise, and be baptised," etc. (Acts xxii. 16.)

Baptism the first obedience of the believer. We also perceive by these questions what it is at which each of these different characters looks, and that the Christian is the most noble of them all. The worldly man looks upon other people, saying, "*Who* will," &c. The Penitent looks to himself, saying, "What must *I* do," &c. But the Christian looks to Christ and says, "Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do!"

After the service we held a church meeting, at which we received three of those who asked "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," for baptism. One of them was a young miner (collier), who formerly was a very wild fellow, but who, some time ago, by an accident fell into the depths of the mine, which is eighty feet deep, and which might have been his death on the spot, but only caused him a slight contusion, so that having arrived so strangely and speedily below, he there could go at his work, but he immediately thanked God and resolved now to seek the Lord and live unto him, who so

wonderfully saved him. The Lord gave grace to him, for from that time he regularly attended our meetings, and he is now somewhat like a "Weaver" amongst the miners. His wife and mother-in-law were baptised with him. After we had returned from the water we celebrated the Lord's death, and so a happy Sabbath ended.

The Sabbath before this I was in Altenburg, where we also had the joy to receive and baptise, I might say, two old young converts, namely, two women of whom the one was seventy, and the other seventy-seven years old.

In U. near Magdeburg, we received a young girl of the age of sixteen years. How various are the pearls in the crown of Christ!

On the 3rd of March we again baptised two others in Halle, who both in their words and lives gave full evidence of conversion.

Last Sunday, the 24th March, I was in Altenburg, where again I had the joy to immerse into the Lord's death in the presence of many spectators, five converts, two men, two women, and a young lady. The Lord be praised for all these souls, may they ever live and die unto him.

A Sabbath here is generally rather long and full of work for a Missionary. Let me only as one specimen mention to you all the services I had to go through, and having all the work alone, last Sunday:—1st, Early in the morning a deacons' meeting; 2nd, The first service and a sermon; 3rd, To solemnize a marriage; 4th, Immediately after dinner, a church-meeting in which we examined the five candidates; 5th, The second service with the sermon; 6th, The baptism, for which we had to walk fully an hour out of the town; 7th, Another church meeting to order some affairs; 8th, The reception of the newly baptised into the church by singing, and an address to them, prayer and bidding them welcome; 9th, Now I administered the Lord's supper, and after this the people desired to hear still more, though it was now near midnight, and the members saying "we must try to get as much as we can from our missionary the days we have him," I had 10th, to hold a Bible-class. Then I had done, but through the Lord's grace I was not done, after a few hours sleep I hastened home to attend to other affairs.

I must omit now to speak of several journeys I made, where I had occasion to preach the gospel in various new places, and in some cases to crowded audiences.

Let me only mention a literary labour which through God's grace I have just finished, it is "*Two Hundred Sketches of Sermons*, with Instructions for the preparation of Sermons," a work of fully 400 pages; it has cost me many a prayer, many a thought, and many a night. Mr. Spurgeon well says that a man's books are his "works;" but I was constrained to write it, and trust that under the Lord's blessing it will be a great help to ministers and Sabbath school teachers. In a few days, when I get the first from the binder, you shall receive a copy of them; they are to be had through Mr. J. G. Oncken, of Hamburg.

Wishing you now, and all our dear friends in England, the Lord's richest blessings at the near May meetings of the year, I am, your friend and co-worker,

MORITZ GRISSLER.

Halle, March 28th, 1867.

INDIA.

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF MRS. ELIZABETH S—, WHO DIED OF FEVER AT MADRAS, ON THE 7TH OCTOBER, 1865.

ELIZABETH S—. was the beloved wife of James A. S—., and daughter of Robert and Harriett T—., all of Madras. She was a child of many prayers, and blessed with pious parents (both of whom are members of the Madras Strict Baptist Church), and from her earliest infancy was taught to attend at the daily family altar and other public means of grace. Her disregard to religious instructions was very discouraging, and the cause of great anxiety both to her affectionate parents and their Christian brethren, who by united, patient and prayerful efforts and affectionate reasonings and expostulations, tried to awaken her young mind to a sense of the necessity

of greater attention to subjects concerning eternity. Nor were their efforts long unrewarded, for doubtless by the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the feeble means used, there was soon, though at the eleventh hour, a change for the better. She was married at an early age, together with her brother on the same day, at Madras. About two months after her marriage, her brother's wife, through the grace of God in answering the fervent prayers of her husband and his Christian brethren, and blessing her husband's many earnest conversations was brought to love Jesus. She wrote a letter to her sister-in-law, the subject of this brief memoir, telling her of all that God had done for her soul, and endeavoured to lead her to come to the same Jesus who was willing and able to save all who came in faith for salvation. "One day," says her husband, "I came home and found my wife in tears, I asked her what was the cause of her sorrow," she replied, "Oh, James! all are converted except myself." Her husband spoke to her, telling her that the present time only was hers and that she should give her heart to Jesus and serve God at once. He affectionately pointed out the uncertainty of life and the great sorrow which would result to all who loved her, if they had any reason to believe her unprepared should she be called to die. These few words by the blessing of the Holy Ghost made her still more anxious for safety in Jesus. Two weeks after the above had transpired she was attacked with fever which gradually increased. This made her pious parents and her husband more anxious about her soul. The latter often asked her if she never prayed. Her religious education had taught her the distinction between saying prayers and praying, and she replied that she had not given it her serious consideration until very lately, but wished to know more of the nature of prayer; when informed, she prayed earnestly for herself that if God saw fit to restore her, he would be pleased to do so, but if not, to make her resigned and to give her support. A day after, she called her husband to her bedside and asked him to speak to her of Jesus. He did so, and asked her, "Do you not feel yourself a sinner?" She replied, "I was a sinner." Knowing that a mere intellectual knowledge will avail but little, the question was repeated. "Yes," she replied, "I am a sinner, but Jesus Christ's blood has washed away all my sins." She then asked him to pray for and with her. After prayer she said, "James, we are to be separated." Seeing him weep she said, "Do not cry; God's will must be done." After this, she prayed the following simple, earnest prayer, "every word of which is engraved on my heart" says the dear afflicted mother.

"Oh Lord Jesus, I am very weak, my faith is very weak, I cannot pray long Jesus. If it is your will to spare me, do not let me run back to the world—Amen."

After this she grew worse. The night before her death she called her husband to her bedside, and said "How will you pay for all this nourishment?" He told her not to disturb herself, that God would provide the means, and added, I hope you are still looking to Jesus; she replied, "He is my husband and my friend." Observing her mother weeping by her bedside, she said "Do not weep mother, you must be reconciled to God's will—God's will be done." These were her last words. She bore her sickness with great patience, leaving all in God's hands. With child-like faith in Jesus she fell asleep in him at the early age of about eighteen years, and only a little more than two months after her marriage, on the 7th October, 1865—another trophy of all-prevailing grace. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

During her illness I saw the departed twice. She listened with eagerness and delight while I spoke to her of Jesus and eternal things, and when I asked her whether she believed and trusted in Jesus alone for her salvation, she answered lowly but yet confidently "Yes, He is my Saviour," and joined in earnest prayer. It is my conviction, and also of several of my dear Christian brethren and sisters

here, that her soul was saved, though in the eleventh hour. It gives me great consolation to know that my conviction is not founded merely on her expressions after she was taken ill, that is, on a mere death-bed repentance, but rather on her conduct before her illness. She had evidently been seriously impressed by the sudden death, by cholera, of a young female friend of hers. From that time a great change was observed in her by all her friends. Her husband too says that he has no doubt she was a new creature before her illness, but from the time she was taken ill, the saving change became more apparent. Thus in life's last hours, the child of many prayers was brought to the foot of the cross. Pious parents, take courage. Dear young reader, presume not upon the eleventh hour. Delay is dangerous! Would it not be still more satisfactory to your Christian friends if you knew the Lord Jesus early, and publicly professed him in his appointed way? "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Behold Jesus; he had not entered his teens when he was "about his Father's will." This same Jesus suffered, died, rose, ascended, and ever lives that you may not perish. Seek Him then while he may be found, for "those that seek me early shall find me," saith the Lord. (Prov. viii. 17). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "He that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but hath everlasting life." (John iii. 18, 36). "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16). May the Lord grant you faith—that faith which worketh by love, purifieth the heart, overcometh the world, and is the *gift* of God, and which He was pleased to give to the young woman who forms the subject of the narrative before you—is the earnest wish of your sincere friend,

Madras, H. F. D.
February, 1867.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

Mr. G. BRADDICK, a deacon of the church under the pastoral care of Mr. Kelley, says that the church has received new tokens of blessing, and that, on the 20th of January, eleven persons were added to the church, most of them young. The Indians continue to be a difficulty and a danger to the settlement. They have robbed the gangs of mahogany cutters who are working in the woods, and demand payment for the mahogany cut for some years past, claiming the land as their own. The soldiers and some of the inhabitants of Belize who were at first sent up to meet them, had to retreat. The superintendent sent to Jamaica for more soldiers, and received 300; but Mr. Braddick thinks they will have no chance with the Indians in bush fighting. Intelligence had been received between the 1st and 9th of February, from a river to the north of Belize, where large sugar works had been established, at a place called Indian Church, that it had been attacked by the Indians, plundered, and two policemen out of eight killed. The people residing there had escaped. The danger to the whole settlement was becoming very serious; Belize having little to protect it against the Indians of the back country, except the merciful providence of God.

Sir John Peter Grant, the Governor of Jamaica, is governor-in-chief of Honduras. He visited it in January and experienced a hope that the "unprovoked attempt made to wrest from the Colony what [he said] is hers by every lawful title, and has been in the undisturbed possession of the British crown, and of the British subjects for generations, might shortly be repelled." He left on January 29th. On the 31st of January the Lieutenant Governor, J. G. Austin, Esq., in opening the Legislative Assembly, said that the Colony had been "rudely assailed in a quarter hitherto considered safe;" that they, the government, were as yet but "imperfectly informed as to the causes giving rise to these events, the number and character of the assailants, the means at their disposal, and the configuration of the country," and consequently they had been "precluded from the formation of any definite plans for the future."

PRESENTATION TO REV. J. STOCK, AT DEVONPORT.

On Thursday evening, April 4th, a tea meeting was held at the Mechanics' Institute, Devonport, for the purpose of commemorating the tenth anniversary of the pastorate of the Rev. John Stock, at the Baptist Chapel, Morice-square, and the reverend gentleman being shortly about to visit the United States, his friends and the members of the congregation took occasion to present him with a purse containing upwards of £50. Nearly 400 persons sat down to tea, at the conclusion of which a public meeting was held, which was presided over by Mr. Peter Adams, and the gentlemen on the platform were the Revs. John Stock, J. M. Charlton, Reichel; T. C. Page, Lambrick; R. W. Overbury, &c. Letters of apology for not being able to attend were read from the Revs. Messrs. Wilson, Horton, Wood, Bourne and Boyns, and also from J. R. Jeffery, Esq., of Liverpool, after which the chairman briefly expressed the pleasure he felt at being present on such an interesting occasion, and then called upon the Rev. John Stock, who, on rising, met with a very warm reception. He commenced by reviewing his early ministerial career in Chatham and other parts of the country, and afterwards proceeded to observe that a series of Providences, which he need not recapitulate, induced him to conclude that it was God's will that he should accept the unanimous call which he received to become the pastor of the church at Morice-square. It was his privilege to be able to state that during his residence amongst them they had never had a single church difference; they had borne with each others infirmities, and had worked together with thorough cordiality and good-will; both deacons and people had ever treated their minister with kindness, with respect, and with deference, and on that score he had not a single fault to find. When his wife and he were added to the church they raised the total membership to 100, but of that number only 54 remained, 46 of the little band having been either called home to their Father's house above, or removed in God's Providence to a distance. During the ten years he had been amongst them he had added by baptism and dismission from other churches 240 fresh members, giving them a yearly average addition of 24, but during the same period their total losses from death and other causes had been 120, so that their clear increase had only been 120, giving them an average net clear increase of 12 members annually, and making their present number of members 220. They had experienced many discouragements, but their encouragements had been in excess of these; but what they required was a firmer faith in God and his truth; a more burning zeal for the honour of Christ and the salvation of souls. The times demanded of them no ordinary devotion; the two opposite phases of error—infidelity which would not believe enough, and popery which believed too much—were both putting forth their utmost energies under able champions, but the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, rightly understood, met all the wants of their fallen human nature; the revelation was complete, and their business was not to wait for new signs from heaven, but to labour, as true men of God, to bring the gospel into effectual contact with the hearts and consciences of men.

Mr. Gill then read the report of the committee, which stated that for the last ten years money had been given towards various objects, including the support of the minister, repairs of the church, the relief of the poor, the hospital, the American Freedmen's Aid Society, &c., and the average sum collected annually was nearly £400, the total sum during the last ten years having amounted to £3,900 18s. The Chairman next said he had an exceedingly pleasant duty to perform, which was to present the Rev. John Stock, on behalf of the committee, with a purse containing £50.

The Rev. John Stock returned thanks. Then followed several brief but interesting addresses from the reverend gentlemen who were on the platform, and the Doxology having been sung the proceedings were brought to a termination. The choir

of the chapel sang several anthems in a very pleasing manner during the evening, adding greatly to the harmony of the evening.

ANNUAL SERVICES.—BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

THE following are the arrangements for the meetings in May. Introductory Prayer meeting, Monday, May 13th, at John-street Chapel, Rev. J. Webb to preside. Annual meeting of the Bible Translation Society, in the evening; at Kingsgate-street Chapel, Dr. Steane to preside, and Revs. J. G. Gregson, late of Agra; W. Walters, of Newcastle; and H. Wilkinson, of Leicester, have consented to speak on the occasion. The Annual Members' meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society, on Tuesday morning, the 14th, at John Street Chapel, chair to be taken at half-past Ten. The Annual sermons on behalf of the Society will be preached on Wednesday morning May 15th, at Bloomsbury Chapel, by the Rev. Newman Hall, LL.B.; and in the evening at Walworth-road Chapel, by the Rev. R. Glover, of Glasgow. Services to commence respectively at 11 a.m. and 6.30, p.m. The Annual Public meeting will be held in Exeter Hall, on Thursday evening, May 16th. Chair to be taken at half-past Six, by J. Candlish, Esq., M.P. for Sunderland, and the Revs. H. Dowson, president of the College, Bury, Lancashire; H. Stowel Brown, Liverpool; S. Martin, Westminster; and D. J. East, president of the College at Calabar, Jamaica, have kindly consented to advocate and support the claims of the mission on the occasion. The Young Men's Missionary Association intend holding their Annual meeting on Friday evening, May 17th, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Chair to be taken at half-past Six o'clock. Sermons on behalf of the mission will be preached in various chapels in London on Lord's Day, May 19th.

BRITISH AND IRISH BAPTIST HOME MISSION.

A SERMON will be preached by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, M.A., in the Walworth-road Chapel, on Friday evening, May 10th, at Seven o'clock. The Members' meeting will be held on Monday, May 13th. The Public meeting will be held in Bloomsbury Chapel, on Tuesday evening, May 14th, at half-past Six o'clock. The following, amongst others, have promised to speak:—the Revs. Charles Stovel, C. J. Middleditch, C. B. Sawday, and T. Berry, missionary at Athlone, Ireland.

BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting will be held in the Lower Room, Exeter Hall, on Wednesday evening, May 15th, at half-past Six o'clock. Rev. H. Dowson, of Chamber Hall, Bury, has consented to preside. Revs. Dr. Evans, Scarborough, W. Walters, Newcastle, and other friends will address the meeting.

BAPTIST COLLEGE, CHAMBER HALL, BURY.

THE first annual meeting of this institution is fixed for Monday, June 24th. Rev. J. Webb, of Ipswich, is expected to preach. Further particulars next month.

MINISTERIAL CHANGE.

THE REV. A. SPENCER has resigned the pastorate of the Baptist Church, Cullingworth. For the present letters should be addressed to him at Rev. W. E. Goodman's, Keighley, Yorkshire.

MARRIAGE.

LORD—STANDEVEN.—March 23rd, at Zion Chapel, Clough-fold, by the Rev. T. Vasey, pastor of the Baptist church, Lumb, assisted by the Rev. A. Nichols, of Sunnyside, near Rawtenstall, Mr. John Ashworth Lord, son of Mr. Thomas Lord, farmer, Nabb, near Water, Lumb, to Miss Sarah Standeven, Primrose Hill, Stacksteads, Rossendale, Lancashire.

RECEIVED FOR THE BAPTIST TRACT SOCIETY.

By the TREASURER.	£	s.	d.
Rev. G. Wright, Beccles.....S.	0	10	0
Mr. Read, Beccles .....S.	0	5	0
Miss Gold, Ramsgate .....S.	1	1	0
Mrs. Hurst, Ramsgate .....S.	0	10	0
Mrs. Braddick, Belize .....D.	1	0	0
Mrs. Risdon, Pershore .....D.	0	10	0
Mr. J. Wilkinson, Nuneaton.....S.	0	10	0